



# State of Louisiana

## Department of Environmental Quality



March 24, 2000

## DEQ COMMITTED TO STRONG PERMIT REGULATION

**T**he Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality conducts an aggressive program of permit issuance and permit regulation. All facilities that discharge into public water bodies in Louisiana are required by law to obtain a permit from the state. DEQ is unequivocally committed to enforcing those laws – and DEQ is getting the job done!

Currently, such businesses and industries in Louisiana are operating under either a permit which has yet to reach a designated “expiration” date or a permit which requires re-permitting in order to be assigned a new “expiration” date. The Clean Water Act of 1990 specifically allows for a facility’s permit to be continued until they are re-permitted. Consequently, under no circumstances are these facilities operating without a permit nor are they operating illegally.

In 1996, permitting functions were shifted from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to Louisiana. At the time, many of the facilities were awaiting re-permitting. It was only in 1996 that the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality assumed jurisdiction over re-permitting functions. Prior to 1996, NPDES Permits (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) were the exclusive provinces of EPA, *not DEQ*. Louisiana is now aggressively continuing to eliminate the backlog. DEQ has filed a Plan of Action with EPA and has instituted such major improvements as Agency Reengineering and a state-of-the-art data processing system. These changes are helping to make all DEQ functions, including re-permitting, more efficient and effective.

At the same time, DEQ is continuing to issue permits to new facilities which are just starting up. While the Agency would benefit from additional human and financial resources, DEQ recognizes that these are probably not forthcoming in the near future. As a result, DEQ will continue to move expediently as we satisfy our legislative mandate to protect the public welfare by maintaining and preserving clean air, waters and lands of the state while considering sound economic development.

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